

Rollinsville Work Center, Boulder Ranger District
Wetlands, Floodplains, and Municipal Watershed Report
August 2, 2011

Proposed Action: The Boulder Ranger District proposes to dispose of a tract of land at the old Rollinsville work center, located just west of Rollinsville, Colorado. The tract is located in the northeast ¼, Section 35, T1S, R73W, and is approximately 36 acres in size. A field visit to the parcel in June, 2011 revealed a spring fed stream that supports a floodplain and wetlands (see attached map). The floodplain and wetlands should be protected when the land is conveyed out of Federal ownership.

Law and policy: Law and policy direct that when a parcel of federal land is considered for disposal, wetlands and floodplains within the parcel must be protected. Direction can be found in Executive Orders 11988 (floodplains) and 11990 (wetlands), as well as in Forest Service Manual FSM 2720.

Executive Orders (EO) 11988 and 11990 direct federal agencies to avoid or minimize adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and wetlands. Floodplains are defined in the order as:

The lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters, including flood prone areas of offshore islands, including, at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent (100-year recurrence) or greater chance of flooding in any one year.

Wetlands are defined in the order as:

Areas inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and under normal circumstances does or would support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas such as sloughs, potholes, wet meadows, river overflows, mud flats and natural ponds.

Both EO's direct that:

When [Federally owned wetlands or] property in floodplains is proposed for lease, easement, right-of-way, or disposal to non-Federal public or private parties, the Federal agency shall (1) reference in the conveyance those uses that are restricted under identified Federal, State, or local floodplain regulations; and (2) attach other appropriate restrictions to the uses of properties by the grantee or purchaser and any successors, except prohibited by law; or (3) withhold such properties from conveyance.

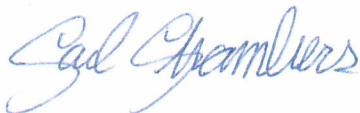
FSM 2720.04b(4) directs that Regional Foresters have the responsibility to "Ensure that all documents conveying interest in or authorizing use of floodplains and wetlands on National Forest System lands contain restrictions that will reduce the risk of loss and preserve the national and beneficial values served by floodplains and wetlands."

Wetlands and Floodplains: As summarized above, the Rollinsville work center parcel contains a spring fed stream. The spring is located near the northwest corner of the parcel and the stream flows from the spring southeast through the parcel and exits the

parcel near the southeast corner. The stream is contained within a floodplain that is slightly to moderately incised into the valley bottom. The floodplain is narrow in its upper portions near the spring, with a width of 8-10 feet. It widens as the stream progresses to the southeast, and is 60-80 feet in width near the southern boundary of the parcel. Most of the area within the floodplain supports wetland vegetation. Some of the area, near the floodplain margins and on slightly elevated terrain within the floodplain supports riparian vegetation. Wetland vegetation includes several species of willow and sedges, Baltic rush, bog orchids, and shooting stars. Riparian vegetation includes aspen, alder, horsetail, and cow parsnip. The stream, floodplain, and wetland are crossed in three locations by culverted stream crossings. The first crossing is located near the southern boundary of the parcel. The second is located near the buildings, and the third is located where FSR 105.1 crosses the stream north of the buildings. The area of wetland within the parcel is approximately 0.9 acres (see attached map).

Municipal Watersheds: Municipal watersheds are those watersheds that provide the principal source of community water (FSM 2500, Chapter 2540). Nearly all watersheds on the Forest provide municipal water. The small stream that flows through the Rollinsville work center parcel is tributary to South Boulder Creek, which is a conveyance for water for the city of Denver. However, no watersheds on the Forest are managed under special prescriptions or management practices specifically to protect municipal water, and no watersheds are managed under formal municipal watershed agreements. The proposed conveyance should have no effect on municipal water quality, particularly if the wetlands and floodplain are protected. Therefore, there should be no effect on municipal watersheds from the proposed action.

Findings: Because the land parcel considered for conveyance contains a floodplain and wetlands, the deed conveying the parcel out of Federal ownership would need to include a deed restriction prohibiting filling or other destruction of the wetland and to prevent development within the floodplain. A survey of the floodplain, described in the restriction, would also encompass the wetlands, and a single restriction would protect both floodplain and wetlands. While the three crossings have filled wetlands and encroached on the floodplain, they are currently in existence at the time the land is contemplated for conveyance, and their continued presence and maintenance is permitted. If the restriction protecting floodplains and wetlands is included in the deed, the conveyance would be in compliance with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 and with FSM 2720.



Carl Chambers
Forest Hydrologist

Attachment: Map of Rollinsville work center parcel boundary, floodplain, and wetlands

Rollinsville Workcenter - Floodplains and Wetlands

